

12 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR:

General Maxwell D. Taylor
Military Representative
of the President

Attached is a copy of a memorandum

I am sending to the President.

JOSEPH W. BULLIES
Director

Enclosure

AWD/ji

- 1 - DCI ✓ "Soviet statement with respect to their nuclear propelled
- 1 - ER rocket submarines"

White House

EL file

TS# 172954/2
442

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10-4
21 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Soviet statement with respect to their nuclear propelled
"rocket" submarines

On 21 July the Soviet press, in commenting upon the Attorney General's speech on the occasion of the launching of the John Marshall Polaris Submarine, stated "that the Soviet Union also has nuclear submarines armed with powerful rockets of various types -- submarines not inferior in speed to the American but faster. The Soviet Union has more and not less of them, in a word, the required number."

For several years now the Intelligence Community has estimated that the Soviets were engaged in a major program of constructing nuclear and ballistic missile submarines; the latter, we had estimated, being both conventional and nuclear powered.

On 18 July, in briefing the Stennis Preparedness Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate, I summarized the view of the Intelligence Community with regard to the Soviet nuclear submarines program as follows:

"There is strong evidence of an extensive Soviet nuclear submarine building program. It is estimated that about a half dozen units are now operational, based in the Murmansk area. The combined building rate at Northern and Far Eastern shipyards is about seven per year. In the future, some nuclear submarines will probably carry missiles to be launched submerged, which we believe could become available in about two years."

Further in discussing Soviet ballistic missile submarines both conventional or possibly nuclear powered, I stated to the Subcommittee, "We have recently identified a new class of long-range submarines designated H-class with sails resembling the G-class." I added that this H-class of Soviet submarines was apparently conventionally propelled, possibly with a nuclear power plant.

We have estimated that the present ballistic missiles carried by both the conventional and the nuclear powered submarines would probably now have a maximum range up to 350 nautical miles and would have to be launched while the submarine was on the surface. Observations indicate that the H-class submarines which is apparently their first nuclear powered class, are probably somewhat smaller than the U.S. Polaris Submarines, approximately 250 - 290 feet in length. During our Navy's observations of them their speed

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did not exceed about 13 knots. Other intelligence indicates that later Soviet nuclear submarine could be larger and faster.

For several years we have estimated that the Soviet Union would not make any announcement about their nuclear submarines until they were able to unveil a substantial number of them. This is apparently what they are now preparing to do.

WILLIAM W. DULLES
Director

AWD/ji

Orig - Brig. Gen. Chester V. Clifton
Military Aide to the President

- 1 - General Maxwell D. Taylor
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